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SUBJECT Nazi War Criminals/Search

[Film clip of the Battle of Normandy.]

DONNA HANOVER: Forty years ago they faced each other as enemies on the battlefields of Normandy. Now, former American and German soldiers are gathering with thousands of fellow veterans in northern France to mark the anniversary of D-Day.

Yesterday, former GIs laid a wreath commemorating their fallen comrades, as did a contingent of former German paratroopers. Tomorrow the dignitaries will stand where thousands fell under a hail of gunfire and shells. President Reagan, Queen Elizabeth and French President Mitterand will be among those visitors, and they will remember the allied invasion which marked the end of the Nazi empire.

But the murderous legacy of the Third Reich is still a vivid memory for countless people all over the world who call it the Holocaust. And they wonder just how many Nazi war criminals managed to escape to South America without being punished for the murders of millions in the death camps.

In a special report Ted O'Brien talks with one Boston lawyer turned Nazi hunter who says there is some evidence U.S. officials were to blame.

TED O'BRIEN: Forty years later the figures still shock and stun: six million Jews, five million others deemed not quite human, systematically murdered by the Nazi regime. One result was the war crimes trial, the Judgment at Nuremburg. Now it appears there was another, U.S. recruitment of and protection for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Nazi war criminals for use in anti-communist intelligence operations.

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JOHN LUFTUS: Allan Dulles and a small group of U.S. intelligence officials, mostly from within the State Department. How many? No one knows. The West German prosecutor estimates that 100,000 Nazi war criminals evaded arrest. Why? These were the cream of the crop of the German war effort against Russia. And Dulles thought that Truman was a fool, that the real enemy was not Germany but communism.

[Clip of Germans saluting Hitler.]

O'BRIEN: SS Colonel Walter Rauh, who died peacefully in his sleep earlier this month in South America, was among those recruits. The man who coordinated the mobile SS gas vans that killed thousands of Jews in eastern Europe and who commanded the SS in Italy, torturing and murdering hundreds of allied agents and partisans, why was he protected?

LUFTUS: The secret that Walter Rauh took with him to his grave was that he'd been working for Allan Dulles even before the war was over. Walter Rauh was part of a top secret negotiation for the surrender and amnesty of SS officials in northern Italy, "Operation Sunrise." Allan Dulles, the U.S. intelligence chief in Switzerland, had his agents meet personally with Rauh and arrange for the surrender.

O'BRIEN: Rauh and the others escaped along the Vatican network of safe houses, monasteries and convents. They were provided with the papers that they needed. Luftus says this amounts to an American betrayal of the Roman Catholic Church.

LUFTUS: The Vatican did not know that the anti-communist refugees that were coming out to their convents were really SS intelligence officers working for Allan Dulles.

O'BRIEN: There's more to come, isn't there?

LUFTUS: I'm afraid this is only the tip of the iceberg.

O'BRIEN: In Boston, this is Ted O'Brien, for The Independent News.

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